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Perishable Public Relations

FROM Washington comes the information that it is taking 60 men and \$1.6 million to handle the Pentagon's public relations this year.

And this amount is not all the military spends to keep information flowing to the public. It covers only the operations at headquarters in Washington, and does not include the PR work carried on by the services outside the nation's capital.

How there could be 60 persons on full salary inside the Pentagon whose sole duty consists of getting news to those outside is beyond us. Even if the PR department does a good job, the taxpayers have grounds for protest. As it is, there are few offices in the United States better known for issuing contradictory or confusing statements of fact.

The most notable exception is the

~~Central Intelligence Agency. No agency anywhere in the world has more trouble with its public information releases than the good old CIA, as was witnessed by the recent handling of the invasion of Cuba. Previously, there was the fiasco concerning the U2.~~

Surely with 60 persons on the public relations payroll, the Pentagon must have some to spare. We would suggest the number immediately be cut to 10, and the savings be used to reduce the defense budget. Of these 10, at least six of the best men should be loaned permanently to the CIA.

Their new job would consist of screening public statements and combining those which were contradictory. In this way, both denials and admissions of U.S. involvement in international incidents could be released simultaneously.—G. L. DeB.